

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2924

To establish a commission to study the culture and glorification of violence
in America.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 17, 2009

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida (for himself, Mr. PAYNE, and Mr. KUCINICH) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To establish a commission to study the culture and
glorification of violence in America.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Presidential Commis-
5 sion to Study the Culture and Glorification of Violence in
6 America Act”.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

8 Congress finds the following:

9 (1) Violence in the United States may be fueled
10 by interrelated factors such as the media, psycho-

1 logical stress, the role of the school system, gun reg-
2 ulations, and economic characteristics.

3 (2) According to the Department of Justice,
4 there were 1,408,337 serious violent crimes in 2007.

5 (3) Teens and young adults experience the
6 highest rates of violent crime.

7 (4) In 2005, approximately 28 percent of public
8 and private school students ages 12–18 reported
9 that they had been bullied at school within the pre-
10 vious 6 months.

11 (5) According to the Department of Justice, the
12 incarceration rate has continuously increased since
13 the 1980s, and prisoners convicted of a violent of-
14 fense make up over half of the national prison popu-
15 lation.

16 (6) According to the Department of Justice, the
17 Federal Government spent \$36,248,000,000 on
18 criminal justice in 2006, while local governments
19 spent \$109,205,351,000.

20 (7) According to several studies from the Amer-
21 ican Journal of Economics and Sociology, economic
22 frustration motivates criminal behaviors and inhibits
23 communal deterrence capacities.

24 (8) According to the Department of Labor, the
25 number of unemployed persons has increased from

1 7,675,000 in April 2008 to 13,724,000 in April
2 2009. Unemployed workers are more likely to be
3 teenagers, young adults, and African-Americans.

4 (9) According to a study from the American
5 Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), prolonged exposure to
6 violence in the media can increase acceptance of vio-
7 lence as an appropriate means of solving problems,
8 can glamorize weapons as sources of personal power,
9 and can contribute to aggressive behavior.

10 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.**

11 There is established a commission to be known as the
12 Presidential Commission to Study the Culture and Glorifi-
13 cation of Violence in America (hereinafter the “Commis-
14 sion”).

15 **SEC. 4. DUTIES OF COMMISSION.**

16 The Commission shall—

17 (1) examine the glorification of violence in the
18 United States;

19 (2) examine the relationship between psycho-
20 logical factors and increased violence;

21 (3) examine the role of the media in the violent
22 atmosphere prevalent today;

23 (4) examine the correlation, if any, between eco-
24 nomic frustration and increased violence;

1 (5) examine the correlation, if any, between
2 ease of access to firearms and increased violence;

3 (6) examine the role of the school system in
4 preventing violent behaviors and identifying potential
5 perpetrators of violence; and

6 (7) make findings and conclusions and rec-
7 ommend potential solutions (including recommenda-
8 tions for legislation and administrative action) to al-
9 leviate the problems related to the glorification of vi-
10 olence in the United States.

11 **SEC. 5. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMISSION.**

12 (a) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Commission
13 shall be composed of 16 members (hereinafter the “mem-
14 bers”) who shall be appointed as follows:

15 (1) 8 members appointed by the President.

16 (2) 2 members appointed by the Speaker of the
17 House of Representatives.

18 (3) 2 members appointed by the minority leader
19 of the House of Representatives.

20 (4) 2 members appointed by the majority leader
21 of the Senate.

22 (5) 2 members appointed by the minority leader
23 of the Senate.

24 (b) QUALIFICATIONS.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Members shall have special
2 knowledge of or experience in the issue of violence
3 in America, and may include sociologists, psycholo-
4 gists, clergy, school counselors, law enforcement offi-
5 cials, victims of violence, and representatives from
6 the media and the entertainment and gun industries.

7 (2) POLITICAL AFFILIATION.—Political affili-
8 ation shall not be a factor in the appointment of
9 members.

10 (c) DEADLINE FOR APPOINTMENT.—Every original
11 member shall be appointed to the Commission not later
12 than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

13 (d) TERMS AND VACANCIES.—Each member shall be
14 appointed for the life of the Commission. A vacancy in
15 the Commission shall be filled in the manner in which the
16 original appointment was made.

17 (e) BASIC PAY.—Members shall not be paid by rea-
18 son of their service as members.

19 (f) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member shall receive
20 travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence,
21 in accordance with sections 5702 and 5703 of title 5,
22 United States Code.

23 (g) QUORUM.—Eight members shall constitute a
24 quorum for conducting the business of the Commission,
25 but a lesser number may hold hearings.

1 (h) CHAIRPERSON.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Chairperson of the
3 Commission (hereinafter the “Chairperson”) shall be
4 elected by the members not later than 30 days after
5 the date on which all of the original members of the
6 Commission have been appointed.

7 (2) PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT.—If the
8 members of the Commission are unable to elect the
9 Chairperson in accordance with paragraph (1), the
10 President shall appoint a member of the Commission
11 to be the Chairperson.

12 (i) MEETINGS.—The Commission shall meet at the
13 call of the Chairperson.

14 **SEC. 6. STAFF OF COMMISSION.**

15 (a) STAFF.—The Chairperson may appoint and fix
16 the pay of the Commission personnel as the Chairperson
17 considers appropriate.

18 (b) APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN CIVIL SERVICE
19 LAWS.—The staff of the Commission shall be appointed
20 subject to the provisions of title 5, United States Code,
21 governing appointments in the competitive service, and
22 shall be paid in accordance with the provisions of chapter
23 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of such title relating
24 to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

1 (c) STAFF OF FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Upon request
2 of the Chairperson, the head of any Federal department
3 or agency may detail, on a reimbursable basis, any of the
4 personnel of the department or agency to assist the Com-
5 mission in carrying out the duties of the Commission.

6 **SEC. 7. POWERS OF COMMISSION.**

7 (a) HEARINGS AND SESSIONS.—The Commission
8 may hold hearings, sit and act at times and places, take
9 testimony, and receive evidence as the Commission con-
10 siderers appropriate to carry out this Act.

11 (b) POWERS OF MEMBERS AND AGENTS.—The Com-
12 mission may delegate to a member or agency any authority
13 of the Commission under subsection (c) or (e).

14 (c) OBTAINING OFFICIAL DATA.—The Commission
15 may secure directly from any department or agency of the
16 United States information necessary to enable the Com-
17 mission to carry out this Act. Upon request of the Chair-
18 person, the head of the department or agency shall furnish
19 the information to the Commission.

20 (d) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES.—Upon
21 the request of the Commission, the Administrator of Gen-
22 eral Services shall provide to the Commission, on a reim-
23 bursable basis, the administrative support services nec-
24 essary for the Commission to carry out its duties.

1 (e) CONTRACT AUTHORITY.—The Commission may
2 contract with and compensate Government or private
3 agencies or persons for supplies or services, without regard
4 to section 3709 of the Revised Statutes (41 U.S.C. 5).

5 **SEC. 8. REPORT OF COMMISSION.**

6 The Commission shall transmit a report to the Presi-
7 dent and the Congress not later than one year after the
8 date that all original members have been appointed to the
9 Commission. The report shall contain a detailed statement
10 of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the
11 Commission.

12 **SEC. 9. TERMINATION OF COMMISSION.**

13 The Commission shall terminate 30 days after sub-
14 mitting the report required by section 8.

15 **SEC. 10. BUDGET ACT COMPLIANCE.**

16 Any spending authority (as defined in subparagraphs
17 (A) and (C) of section 401(c)(2) of the Congressional
18 Budget Act of 1974) authorized by this Act shall be effec-
19 tive only to such extent and in such amounts as are pro-
20 vided in appropriations Acts.

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